

CA DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION
STATE
SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Braille Bites

California School for the Blind

VOLUME 8, EDITION 3

JUNE 2017

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Superintendent's message

CSB's final issue of Braille Bites for the 2016-2017 school year celebrates our accomplishments. We are extremely proud of our twelve graduates. Each has made great strides academically as well as achieved skills to maximize their independence and confidence. Learn about their accomplishments and their plans for the future.

In February, **CSB** completed its initial WASC accreditation visit. A team of three special education professionals visited our campus, and reviewed a comprehensive self-review document. We were informed in April that **CSB** received initial WASC accreditation. This is a great accomplishment for our school. Read about the visit and the WASC accreditation process.

In addition to our academic achievements, our students participated in a great track meet at Priory Prep Academy. View the great photos and insights from our students.

Our younger students celebrated the life of Anthony S. one of their classmates, who passed away earlier this year by planting a tree, and

By: Sharon Sacks



remembering his kindness through a beautifully written article in this issue.

As I reflect on this school year, I want to thank our dedicated staff for their hard work and energy. It is obvious that they are committed to ensuring quality services for our students. They believe in the success of each of our students and strive for excellence. This is what makes **CSB** great!

Track Meet By: Marie Trudelle

Several students from **CSB** participated in a track meet at Priory School. Our students were enthusiastic, displayed good sportsmanship, and pushed themselves in each competition. Students participated in a myriad of events including running races, long jump, shot put, and the discus.

I loved watching our students connect with the Priory kids over shared interests such as Beyoncé, computers, sports, and YouTube.









Anthony S.

2003-2017

We remember Anthony as our classmate. He was a very kind and happy person! He was always telling jokes and smiling. At recess, he loved to dance and make people laugh. His favorite poem was a Halloween poem about Dracula, that he told with a Dracula accent all year round!

We loved Anthony. We really miss him.

A trip to the Lighthouse for the Blind

By: Mary Durski

On May 2, 2017, Gaby, Maria, Billy, Christian, Parker and Carlos along with counselor Roger K., traveled to the Lighthouse for the Blind in San Francisco to hear Erik Weihenmayer (blind mountain climber and adventure seeker; www.touchthetop.com) speak. Besides hearing Erik read from his book, No Barriers, the students got to personally meet Erik and talk with him. ________





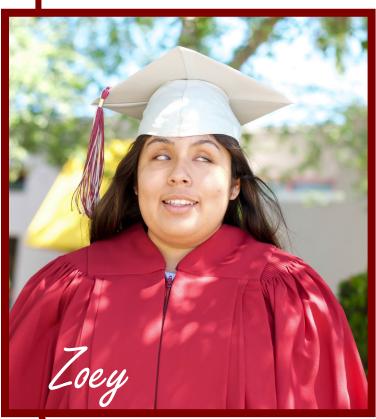


I came to **CSB** in March of 2015 from Colony High. My first teacher from **CSB** was Mary Durski. She was a very patient teacher and took her time to help me on the rest of the work that they gave me from my district. She had six other people to help also but she still helped me anyway. I enjoyed my time with her.

The part that was hard for me at first was when I went to Newark High. Mrs. Eck and I couldn't understand each other at first. It took a while for us to get used to each other. My second semester wasn't that bad like my first semester. My teachers from Newark for that year were Mrs. Moss, Mrs. Farrell, and Mr. Slocum.

Mrs. Moss was a good teacher in drama class but I wasn't that good because I am not good at expressing myself in scripts. I ended with an F for that class. Yeah I know. Mr. Slocum is very chill. Since I don't always use my cane right, he makes me turn around and start my route again. For example, one day I had my cane as if I was holding a pen. He made me go through the 800 building, cross the 400 building, then finally I got to the 300 building when we could have just crossed the courtyard. All because I wasn't using my cane the right way. Mrs. Eck was proud of it.

At home I'm this quiet person who does not say much, always has her earphones on in the car, doesn't talk to anyone much, and stays to herself. But when I'm in school, it's a whole other story. I'm loud, crazy, full of energy, funny,



and when I have my earphones on, I tend to sing because I cannot hear myself. I'm social, and sometimes the people who I hung out with in drama class last year still say hi to me every time I pass by. I'll get even more cray once I drink my energy drinks. Don't worry guys. I only take one once a month or once a week.

This year has been awesome. Mrs. Eck and I understand each other a bunch more, and also I've changed a lot for my good compare to my last year. Thank you to Mrs. Eck for being patient with me I really appreciate it. One thing I liked about **CSB** is when I went to the senior trip. I really don't know what to do after school. I might go to Hatlen Center. I'm happy for this last year. I made it!

I have been a student at **CSB** for 14 years. I did a lot of amazing things here at **CSB**.

For APE, I went swimming, hiking, boating, rock climbing, ice skating and working out in the fitness center and gym.

In my classroom, I learned reading, writing, math, budgeting, cooking and safety skills.

For O&M, I learned the following skills: route planning, use of the white cane and paratransit.

I learned to use the BrailleNote, computer and iPhone with the technology staff.

My favorite part about **CSB** was going to art class to work on paper mache, collages, drawing pictures, clay art, and painting pictures.

My plan when I leave **CSB** is to work at Aim High or Cisco using job skills that I learned from **CSB** at the dining hall, the Closet, and the Rocket Shop.

I would like to thank the teaching assistants, dorm staff and teachers for helping throughout the years I have been here at **CSB**.





I came to CSB in 2010. It was fun here. I enjoyed swinging on the swings. Also I liked swimming. I enjoyed when we went to Chrissy Field. It was fun having a picnic and sitting in the water. I liked going to the Great Mall for APE. I liked walking around the mall because its big. I went to the city hall in San Francisco and the Lighthouse for the Blind. I enjoyed going to Sausalito on the Ferry. At CSB I learned how to cook and how to clean after I am finished. I also learned how to use customer service at the stores. I learned how to use East Bay Paratransit. It was a good experience so I could learn how to get to places. Kathy Quilici was my first teacher and she helped me a lot. Carolyn McKenna was a good teacher. Valerie Grandstaff was my job coach at The Rocket Shop. Katie Smith was my Orientation and Mobility teacher and I thank her for taking me off campus for mobility lessons. Cindy Green was my most fantastic teacher. Ms. Linville was a nice principal. After I graduate I am planning to go to Orientation Center for the Blind. After that I want to go to Hatlen Center.



I have been a student at the California School for the Blind for four years. The first day I started at CSB I met my best friend Teresa H. Some of the best memories I have at CSB are being selected Prom Queen this year and going with my best friend to a French restaurant. I will miss seeing my friends everyday, cooking with the Bridge Program, and dorm activities. After I leave CSB, I will go back to my district and finish my English courses and then I plan on enrolling at Sierra Community College in Nevada City.

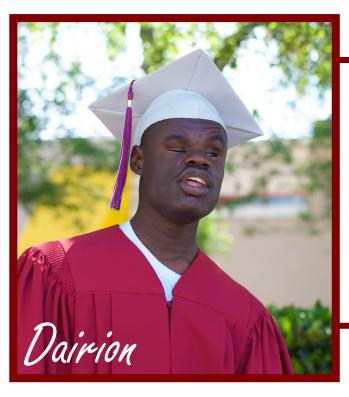




I've been at **CSB** for two years. I enjoy the apartment program and mobility. I made a lot of friends. When I came to **CSB** my reading skills needed improvement. Now I'm better with my reading and writing. I am looking for a job in the food industry. I will continue my education. I'm looking forward to starting a new chapter in my life.







The year that I came to **CSB** was 2013. My favorite activity was walking club. I love to sing and dance. I love to attend assemblies. Next year my plans are to start at a new program where I can go on outings.



I have been a student at **CSB** for seven years. My activities here and in the nearby community have been too numerous to name. From flying high in a simulated parachute jump to performing karaoke tunes on stage in the theater, I've been quite involved in student life while at **CSB**.

My favorite part of life at **CSB** has been my involvement with the Music department. Mr. Siligo and David Grandstaff have served as

wonderful mentors to me, and have encouraged me to be involved in musical productions as often as possible, and I have thoroughly enjoyed doing so.

After I enroll in college I plan on using my foreign language skills to either enter the legal field or become a professional translator. Ideally, I'd like to use my skills professionally to work for the federal government.

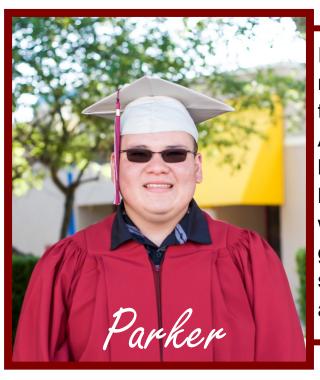


I have been at **CSB** for three years. I began studying at CSB when I was 18 years old and did not know anyone and I knew I had a lot to learn. During these three years, I have learned how to be independent, studied Braille, O&M skills, English, Math and Science. I have met many students and have made new friends and now we are very close. Even though I have learned from many teachers, although I believe I have learned many academic and life skills from Ms. Durski. Attending CSB has opened new windows of opportunity for my future by introducing me to helpful programs like the Lighthouse for the Blind, employment training, the apartment living program for independent living skills and computer skills. I am going to miss CSB a lot. I am going to

miss all my friends and teachers. Next school year

I will be attending Laney College in Oakland.





I have been at **CSB** for 2 years. I have really enjoyed my time here! I would like to give a big thanks to all of my teachers. All of the great, useful skills that I 've learned here will definitely help me become independent and successful at whatever I do in live. I will miss all of the great friends that I have made here at school. I really has a wonderful time while attending **CSB**.

My name is Elena Hodges. I have been a student at CSB for five years. My activities here have been numerous. I have particularly enjoyed various athletic activities at **CSB**, including goalball, running, boating, and ice skating.

My favorite part of life at **CSB** has been my involvement with the Art department. Ms. Tayam has encouraged my creativity in many ways, and I have thoroughly enjoyed creating ceramic pieces as well as

mixed media artwork.

After I graduate, I plan on attending the Hatlen Center in San Pablo for additional training, and then enroll in community college. Ideally, I'd like to use my art skills to open my own gallery. I will miss the many friends I've made over the years here at CSB. I promise to visit often, though!







I have been at **CSB** for a year and six months. At first, I had no idea where I was and what I was supposed to do. Then as time went by, I started recognizing **CSB**.

I enjoyed all of my classes and subjects. I will miss working at the Rocket Shop and helping people around the school. I would like to thank my teachers, aids and students for helping and being there for me. I enjoyed working on Art and Math. After I graduate, I will continue with my education. Also, later on I want to learn cooking and continue with art projects. I would like to go to a university and become a braille teacher. I know I will miss **CSB** and everyone around there. I really

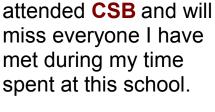
enjoyed the dances and parties. I will always remember **CSB** and all of my friends.





When I first came to **CSB** in 2009, I wanted nothing more than to go home and never come back. But as time went by, I began to make friends and grew close to my teachers and counselors. I became more and more fond of **CSB** and felt as if it was a second home. During my first few years at **CSB**, I struggled through math, spelling, and especially cooking. Now I am working my way through algebra, and an advanced English course. I have also learned many great recipes. My two proudest achievements at **CSB** are when I won third place in the APH (American Printing House for the Blind) Art Awards and when I created a postcard and sold it in the Rocket Shop. By selling my postcards, I was able to raise \$85.00 for the 2016 **CSB** Prom. I am glad to have







CONGratulations TO THE Graduating CLass of 2017

Manuel, Zoey, alissa, rebecca, elena, parker, gaby, dairion, travis, evelyn, shelby and carlos

Prom By: Nadrina Weseman

The 2017 California School for the Blind was fantastic. The prom was held at the stunningly beautiful Oakland Scottish Rite Grand Ballroom. The Oakland Scottish Rite which was built in the 1920's, exemplifies the Art Deco period to the maximum. The walls in the ballroom are painted a delicate cream color. The floor is made of beautiful pine hardwood. There are three massive chandeliers which hang from the heavily decorated ceiling. This is a truly stunning room which our student committee chose to decorate minimally.

The student committee chose a simple yet elegant theme this year, Western Nights. In keeping with the theme the tables were decorated with glass mason jars. The jars were wrapped in burlap and a simple yellow silk flower was added. Red glass pebbles were placed inside of the mason jars, and a mixture of



sunflowers and wild flowers were placed between the pebbles. Finally, the mason jars sat on top of burlap that was over-lapped to resemble a wagon wheel. The senior table was decorated in a similar way. Large red pitchers with the same floral decorations sat on top of a burlap runner. As a final accent, gold charger plates were placed at each place setting.

The food was just as magnificent as the venue. The students feasted on a buffet of barbequed ribs, chicken and hot links. Dinner also included a green salad, potato salad and dinner rolls which rounded out the meal. An assortment of cookies and brownies ended the meal. Many students commented that they needed to dance their food away because they ate so much.

After dinner, the students danced and took pictures at the photo booth well into the night. The prom king and queen were crowned and given cowboy hats to keep as souvenirs.

In addition to having prom the student committed voted to have a cocktail hour. The cocktail hour was held on site in our gym. The theme of the cocktail hour was" Under the Sea." The gym was adorned with underwater features. The centerpieces on the tables were created by the students. Each student was given sand, sea shells, and a vase. Each student came up with their own unique decoration. The centerpieces sat on top of agua table cloths. A school of fish adorned the walls of

the gym. Starfish twinkle lights were added as an accent. The students had a light meal of tuna/chicken salad sandwiches, strawberries, pineapple and blue Hawaiian punch.





Senior Trip

By: Nadrina Weseman

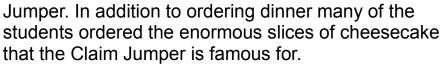
This year the seniors at the California School for the Blind were treated to a busy weekend of activities for their senior trip. Nine students participated in the trip. The weekend occurred from April 28-30.

Friday April 30 was the first day of the senior trip. The first activity for the students was a studio session at Color Me Mine. Each student picked a project to paint, after the project was painted it was then glazed and fired. The students spent two hours at the studio in Pleasanton.

The next stop on the itinerary was I-Fly. The students were able to simulate sky diving while being inside of a vertical wind tunnel. The students had an awesome time. The instructor was great; he flew several students all the way to the top of the wind tunnel. Some students were allowed to fly without the instructor holding them.

Our last activity on Friday was dinner at Outback Steakhouse. Many of the students were so tired from the day's activities that they were falling asleep before their dinner arrived.

Though there were not as many activities on Saturday however, it was as adventurous as Friday. The students spent the entire day at Great America. They were able to ride as long as they wanted on as many rides as they wanted. They also received a souvenir cup with unlimited drinks for the day. The day ended with dinner at The Claim





Our last day of activities was Sunday. The students wore their best clothing to have brunch and a two hour

cruise around the bay on the Hornblower. The students ate a variety of buffet foods while they listened to piano music. In addition to the cruise each student received two pictures. The very last activity was a barbeque. Many of the students were still full from the sumptuous buffet.



After nearly two years of hard work, the California School for the Blind is delighted to announce that as of April 26, 2017, we have been granted Initial Accreditation as a Supplementary Educational Program (SEP) by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). Achievement of accreditation demonstrates that CSB is focused on a mission and goals for students; it is student-oriented and examines its students' performance continuously; it accepts objective evaluation from a team of outside peer professionals trained by WASC; it maintains a qualified faculty within an effectively organized school; it collaboratively assesses the quality of its educational programs on a regular basis; and it plans for the future.

In December 2016, **CSB** submitted our initial accreditation document to WASC, along with supporting evidence in the form of achievement data, manuals, plans, handbooks, etc. In February 2017, a Visiting Committee composed of three educators from outside of **CSB**, one of whom had extensive experience with schools for the blind, spent two days at **CSB**. During their time at **CSB**, they observed programs, met with and interviewed students, staff, parents, and community members, and toured the campus facilities. At the conclusion of their visit, the Committee provided **CSB** with a report on their findings. The Committee agreed with all aspects of **CSB**'s self-assessment, including **CSB**'s three self-identified program goals:

The California School for the Blind needs to work toward increasing the connections between assessment and instruction, and improve assessment data collection for all enrolled students.

The California School for the Blind needs to develop and implement a formal program to provide appropriate curriculum and instruction for English Learners.

The California School for the Blind needs to establish a scope and sequence of curriculum and instruction for all students and improve the consistency of curriculum use on campus.

Based upon their observations and the feedback obtained during their visit, the Committee added two additional areas of need:

The California School for the Blind and the California Department of Education need to work together to develop a more effective process for purchasing and hiring in order to recruit and maintain the most talented employees.

The California School for the Blind needs to find a way to document their Individual Education Programs for students online. Having the IEPs in electronic format provide for better sharing of information between agencies that support BVI students.

CSB's accreditation status is valid until June 30, 2020. Prior to the end of the initial accreditation period, **CSB** will need to complete a new self-study assessment and submit a new self-study report, which will include the progress made in meeting the recommendations of the Initial Visit Committee. At that time, a WASC Visiting Committee will conduct another site visit to review the new self-study findings and supporting evidence, conduct classroom observations, and meet with stakeholders. At that time, a recommendation will be made regarding continuance of **CSB**'s accreditation status.

CSB is incredibly proud of this achievement, and congratulations are in order for every staff member on campus for their hard work and efforts on behalf of blind and visually impaired students in California and beyond. Finally, this achievement would not have been possible if not for the amazing students of **CSB**, their families, and the greater community.

WHAT'S COMING UP AT CSB?

August: 21st - First day of school!!!!

September: 4th - Labor Day Holiday (no school)

6th - Picture Day

27th - Homecoming Dance

October: 9th - Staff Development (no school)

18th - White Cane Day

31st - Halloween Dance

